

Benevolent gift in danger of being spoiled

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Editor,

There is local lore about an infant girl who died whose name was Jean Klock that none of us ever had the chance to meet. Then there were her parents who lived and worked in this county and the city of Benton Harbor and desired that in some way her memory should live on "forever." This desire took place in the form of a public park that they gifted "for the children." The following is a quote from John Klock's biography:

"There is little joy in piling up money that you do not need, and so the major part of my excess earnings have been spent in providing beaches, parks, churches and schools. Our first major gift was Jean Klock Park, a half-mile of Lake Michigan frontage, which was given to the city of Benton Harbor. I say 'our,' for my wife was very anxious to give this park to the city in memory of our little child. Her untimely death made possible the giving to other children the share of our earnings which belonged to her, but which she could not use." - Jean Nellis Klock

In light of this, how would you feel if any piece of an extraordinary parcel of lakefront that you, or anyone for that matter, donated and dedicated to forever be a memorial to your daughter was in turn sold, lost and decimated? One may as well dig up graves at the old cemetery on Territorial in the process, as who really cares? Most of those who lie there are dead and have been forgotten for at least 86 1/2 years now, so they will never know the difference, right?

The problem is there is always someone left behind who remembers and someone who cares. Thanks are in order for John and Carrie Klock for affording the public for these past 86 1/2 years the privilege to enjoy, appreciate and truly love their magnificent gift, Jean Klock Park. I for one will never forget. I only hope they and their daughter Jean can comfortably rest in peace.

Carol Drake

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